

degree to which John Stringfellow was able to look into the future. Nearly all the essential features of modern aircraft were incorporated in his model, even if they were still in a somewhat crude form. A study of bird flight led him to believe that there were great virtues in the flexible, single-surface trailing-edge. Many of the early full-size machines had this characteristic wing construction, the theory being that it adapted itself to the air currents. It has now been abandoned, but we are back again to something of the sort in the hunt for some device which will relieve the stresses in the wings of an aircraft when it meets a sharp-edged gust. In the Brabazon Mr. Russell uses deflecting flaps to achieve the same thing as did the flexible trailing-edge, so perhaps the pioneers were not so far wrong after all.

The Wright brothers made a different approach to the problem by building a wind tunnel for their model tests, but the free-flying model has come into use again in the most recent times for exploring flight at supersonic speeds. We have the advantage that we can govern the flight of a model by remote control (not too consistently, so far), but a hundred years ago the limited Stringfellow success was at least as great a triumph. He proved that a fixed-wing machine could be sustained in the air by the lift of its wings, generated by its forward speed. And this was at a time when most experimenters were trying to emulate the birds with their flapping wings, a task which modern high-speed photography has shown to be quite beyond mechanical solution.

The Northolt Disaster

VERTICAL "stacking" has been criticised from many sides and on various grounds, not the least being the danger of icing to the aircraft which are unfortunate enough to be given the layer in which icing conditions may obtain. The system was given another blow by the disaster which befell the Scandinavian DC-6 and the R.A.F. York near Northolt last Sunday.

The collision brought home the fact that the system contains other risks. In this case there was no question of icing. The York had arrived from Malta and had been circling for about an hour. The DC-6 had come from Scandinavia, and the pilot advised Control that he proposed returning to Amsterdam.

Ministry regulations covering standard instrument-approach and holding procedures were issued as Notice

CONTENTS

Outlook	29
Vampire Venturers	31
Hamble Heyday	33
Here and There	35
Civil Aviation News	37
International Gliding Contests	41
Auster Trainer	46
Eglinton Excitement	48
Balliol at Bitteswell	50
Leadership in the R.A.F.	51
Commonwealth Research	52
Correspondence	53
Service Aviation	54

Forthcoming Events, page 53

to Airmen No. 117 of 1948, and lays down the proper procedure to be followed. In this particular instance there were only four aircraft "stacked" over the airport, so it cannot be argued that the accident was due to overcrowding. The DC-6, it appears, was at the lowest height (2,500ft), with the York next above it at 3,000ft and the other two aircraft above them.

From what took place it would seem that some error either by Approach Control or in pilot's procedure must have been responsible for the accident. When an aircraft wishes to leave the "stack," the pilot must obtain permission from Approach Control, who, in turn, obtain the height, the route, and the "gate" from which the aircraft must leave the Metropolitan Control Zone from Uxbridge Control. Approach Control passes this information to the aircraft. If both aircraft set their altimeters correctly after obtaining QFE from Approach Control they should have been separated vertically by 500ft, and if both had obeyed instructions that permission must be obtained to leave the "stack," they would have remained separated vertically until Uxbridge knew it was safe to climb or to lose height. Thus one is forced to the conclusion that the accident must have been caused by a flaw in the system of vertical "stacking." Doubtless the report of the Inspector of Accidents will ascertain the exact cause and allocate the blame.

What is sorely needed is a unification of navigational aids to ensure precision flying in small areas, or the alternative of having each aircraft fitted with an orbit-meter, as is done in the R.A.F. Transport Command.



TRANSPORT COLUMN, 1948: Travellers last week on the railway which skirts the Handley Page airfield at Radlett saw this parade of a score or so of Hastings C. Mk. I high-speed military transports (Bristol Hercules engines). Having regard to the news from Berlin it is good to know that the R.A.F. has already taken delivery of more than this number of Hastings. The nearest machine, incidentally, has the new Transport Command lacquer finish.

"Flight" photograph.